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OVERVIEW OF UNHCR ACTIVITIES

PART III

BACKGROUND INFORMATION ON HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE POLICY, PROGRAMMES, ADMINISTRATIVE AND FINANCIAL MATTERS

1994-1996

GE.95-02483

I. INTRODUCTION

1. This Report, which constitutes Part III of the Overview document (A/AC.96/845), reviews the issues related to humanitarian assistance, programmes, funding, human resources and other matters that have been the subject of attention of the Executive Committee, particularly in its Sub-Committee on Administrative and Financial Matters (SCAF), from 1 July 1994 to 30 June 1995. As such, the Report not only gives an overview of the work of SCAF over the past year, it also indicates the issues currently before the SCAF and those that will be among the matters to be dealt with by the proposed Standing Committee in 1996.

2. The issues considered in this Report are directly related to the international protection and humanitarian assistance activities of UNHCR; some of them reflect the humanitarian challenges facing the international community. Within this broader perspective, a number of the issues relate to resolutions and conclusions of the General Assembly and its subsidiary bodies, especially those of the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC); some also reflect UNHCR's preparations for, or response to, various international conferences.

3. This Report seeks to highlight the range of governance exercised by the Executive Committee over the policies and programmes for which budgetary and financial information is provided in Part I and Part II of this document. In considering the information herein, which has a focus on humanitarian assistance, it should be borne in mind that the provision of such assistance by UNHCR, while often vital, is subordinate to UNHCR's responsibility to provide international protection. The latter responsibility is UNHCR's raison d'être for the international community.

II. THE WORK OF SCAF

4. The Sub-Committee on Administrative and Financial Matters (SCAF) met on four occasions over the last twelve months: 29 September 1994; 16 January 1995; 4 April 1995; and 20 June 1995. The first of these meetings was chaired by the then Chairman of the Executive Committee and Chairman of SCAF, H.E. Ambassador A. Kamal (Pakistan). The meetings of the Sub-Committee during 1995 were chaired by H.E. Ambassador J. Esper Larsen (Denmark).

5. Reports of these meetings are to be found in the following documents:

- Report of the Sub-Committee on Administrative and Financial Matters (A/AC.96/838);
- Report of the 16 January 1995 Meeting of the Sub-Committee on Administrative and Financial Matters (EC/SC.2/72);
- Report of the 4 April 1995 Meeting of the Sub-Committee on Administrative and Financial Matters (EC/SC.2/73);
- Draft Report of the 20 June 1995 Meeting of the Sub-Committee on Administrative and Financial Matters (EC/1995/SC.2/CRP.25).

6. In addition to these meetings of SCAF, Informal Consultations on UNHCR's Budget Structure, chaired by H.E. Ambassador J. Esper Larsen took place on 22 March, 8 May, 7 June and 15 June 1995. The results of these informal consultations were adopted at the SCAF meeting on 20 June 1995.

7. An Informal Consultation on Service Packages (see paras. 17, 18) was chaired by H.E. Ambassador J. Esper Larsen on 3 April 1995. A second informal meeting on this subject was held on 13 June 1995; this meeting was chaired by the Director of the Division of Programmes and Operational Support of UNHCR. The meeting agreed that further technical discussions between UNHCR and interested Governments would take place, on a bilateral basis. Broader conceptual issues were to be pursued in the context of the related Task Force needed by the Department of Humanitarian Affairs (DHA). A further Informal Consultation would be convened by UNHCR on Service Packages, if needed. Progress would be reported to the meeting of SCAF on 13 October 1995 under the agenda item on emergency response.

8. A further series of consultations of relevance to the work of SCAF, were those of the Working Group on Executive Committee Working Methods. At its inter-sessional meeting on 16 January 1995, SCAF reviewed conference room paper EC/1995/SC.2/CRP.2 entitled "Note on Executive Committee Working Methods." It decided to establish a working group, to be presided over by the Chairman of SCAF in close consultation with the Executive Committee Chairman. The Working Group on Executive Committee Working Methods met on 22 March, 1 June and 20 June 1995 under the chairmanship of H.E. Ambassador J. Esper Larsen. A Progress Report (EC/1995/SC.2/CRP.15) was presented to the 4 April 1995 meeting of SCAF. A draft Report of the Working Group on Executive Committee Working Methods was considered and adopted by the Working Group on 20 June 1995. With the exception of those recommendations dealing with Executive Committee documentation, which were considered by an Extraordinary Session of the Executive Committee on 20 June 1995, the remainder of the Working Group's recommendations will be considered by SCAF in October 1995. These will be presented for adoption to the forty-sixth session of the Executive Committee.

III. HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE

9. In providing humanitarian assistance, UNHCR continues to implement the High Commissioner's three-pronged strategy of preparedness, prevention and solutions which she articulated in her opening statement to the Executive Committee in 1991. This strategy seeks to assure the following: a level of preparedness so as to respond rapidly to emergency situations; the provision of assistance and protection in such a way as to avert, where possible, the occurrence of new refugee flows; and concerted efforts to achieve durable solutions to refugee problems, notably through voluntary repatriation. The challenge of this strategy is to combine the traditional activities of protection and assistance with more innovative approaches to refugee problems.

A. Coordination

10. In providing humanitarian assistance, UNHCR has been guided by the concerns of ECOSOC as regards the effectiveness of interventions and durability of results by making sure that its activities, especially in complex humanitarian emergencies, are coordinated with the those of the rest of the United Nations system and the international community. As the High Commissioner has often stated, the strategy of prevention, preparedness and solutions can succeed only to the extent that UNHCR manages to build wider coalitions with the broader international community: Governments, United Nations agencies, intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations. Inter-agency coordination, including the central role of DHA, was an important dimension of SCAF's deliberation on assistance policies and strategies for the promotion of durable solutions, particularly sustainable reintegration, at its meeting on 16 January 1995 (EC/1995/SC.2/CRP.4 and EC/SC.2/72, paras. 24-28, refer).

11. Concrete expressions of UNHCR's efforts to promote coordination in complex humanitarian emergencies may be found in UNHCR's strengthened collaboration with DHA, the Department of Peace-Keeping Operations (DPKO) and the Department of Political Affairs (DPA). UNHCR continues to refine and develop concrete operational agreements with a range of agencies. For example, UNHCR and WFP regularly review the implementation of their Memorandum of Understanding (MOU). An MOU was signed with UNFPA on 30 June 1995, and discussions are at an advanced stage with UNICEF on an MOU. As regards the non-governmental sector, UNHCR currently has almost 500 implementing partners; of these, some 340 are local non-governmental organizations (NGOs). As part of its efforts to enhance its partnership with NGOs, the Office launched the PARinAC (UNHCR-NGO Partnership in Action) process which was aimed at building a relationship of true partnership between UNHCR and NGOs. A report (EC/1995/SC.2/CRP.20) on the follow-up to the Oslo Global Conference (6-9 June 1994) and its Declaration and Plan of Action was presented to the SCAF meeting on 20 June 1995.

1. De-mining and Related Issues

12. One issue of particular importance for many UNHCR operations, and for which United Nations system-wide coordination is required, is that of de-mining. The Secretary-General has made the Department of Humanitarian Affairs the focal point within the United Nations for coordinating de-mining and related issues.

13. It will be recalled that the approach of the Office of the High Commissioner to the issue of de-mining was presented in a conference room paper (EC/1994/SC.2/CRP.14) presented to the 17 May 1994 meeting of SCAF. Consistent with an advocacy role on this issue, UNHCR has made two statements to the Group of Government Experts preparing for the review of the Convention on Prohibitions or Restrictions on the Use of Certain Conventional Weapons Which May Be Deemed to Be Excessively Injurious or to Have Indiscriminate Effects, and the Protocol on Prohibitions or Restrictions on the Use of Mines, Booby Traps and Other Devices (Protocol II). In the first statement (May 1994), UNHCR joined with other humanitarian agencies and NGOs in calling for a ban on the use, production, stockpiling, sale, transfer or export of anti-personnel land-mines. In the second statement (January 1995), UNHCR sought greater protection for humanitarian field

staff under the draft Article 8 of the Convention. In addition, UNHCR participated in the International NGO Forum on Land-mines which took place in Cambodia on 5-7 June 1995. UNHCR also be participated in the International Meeting on Mine Clearance (Geneva, 5-7 July 1995) -- convened by the Secretary-General in response to General Assembly resolution 49/215. In her statement to this meeting, the High Commissioner denounced the scourge of land-mines and gave an undertaking that UNHCR would not knowingly purchase the products of companies that sell or manufacture anti-personnel mines or their components.

14. UNHCR welcomes the progress being made on the issue of de-mining. As the above-mentioned document on land-mines noted, while awaiting "a more comprehensive and United Nations system-wide approach [to de-mining], the Office of the High Commissioner has had to take a number of initiatives, especially so as not to delay progress in regard to voluntary repatriation movements. Where land-mines threaten the return of refugees, and where there is no local or international capacity to protect or assist in regard to mines, UNHCR has taken the necessary steps, in coordination with all relevant bodies, to ensure return in safety and dignity" (EC/1994/SC.2/CPR.14, para. 27). Accordingly, UNHCR initiated a comprehensive mine risk reduction programme in Guatemala, through contracting a German NGO, IPPNW, during 1994. UNHCR also started a mine awareness education campaign in Georgia/Abkhazia in late 1994; the second and further phases of this campaign were postponed in March 1995 due to a shortage of funding and the deterioration in the security situation in the Gali region of Abkhazia. UNHCR has made plans for a mine awareness campaign in Western Sahara, and is supporting DHA in a coordinated programme of land-mine activities for the forthcoming Angola repatriation.

B. Programme priorities

15. In the various phases of its assistance cycle, UNHCR seeks to give priority to a number of particular issues. These issues relate both to phases of the assistance cycle itself, namely the emergency phase and reintegration activities, as well as to particular beneficiary groups (refugee women and refugee children) or concerns, such as the environment. The Office seeks to address these issues by integrating effective measures into its ongoing programme planning and implementation cycles.

1. Emergency preparedness and response

16. Since 1991, UNHCR has taken a range of initiatives to enhance its emergency preparedness and response capability. The most recent update on these activities, in particular efforts to maintain and improve established standby arrangements involving UNHCR staff and other agencies, is set out in the report of the High Commissioner to ECOSOC (E/1995/52, paras. 42-47).

17. "Service packages", though of a different nature and magnitude, need to be placed in the context of these standby arrangements. In July 1994, at the height of the Rwanda emergency, and in the face of the overwhelming needs of this

emergency, UNHCR proposed to Governments a series of stand-alone assistance/serv packages such as sanitation facilities, water management and airhead management. These services were provided by Governments, as a complement to UNHCR's resource through the rapid mobilization of military or civil defence capacities.

18. Many lessons were learnt from this experience. At the forty-fifth sessi of the Executive Committee, a number of Governments requested the High Commissio to refine and improve further the concept of service packages. A concept paper presented at an informal consultation on 3 April 1995 and a follow-up meeting wa held on 13 June 1995 to brief interested Governments on progress and to enlist t support of those in a position to provide one or more of the twenty service packages under elaboration. UNHCR's work on this issue is coordinated with DHA, other agencies and NGOs (including WFP, UNICEF, International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC)). It is clear that UNHCR's experience w and work on service packages -- as that of others with the use of military asset in humanitarian operations -- could have a wider relevance for the United Nation system. A Task Force, chaired by DHA, was set up under the aegis of the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) in early 1995; the Task Force is to devel a common framework to ensure the most effective use of military and defence asse in support of all types of humanitarian operations, where their use is appropria

19. UNHCR is currently conducting a "lessons learnt" exercise on the Rwanda emergency. An initial paper (EC/1995/SC.2/CRP.21) on the subject was presented the SCAF meeting on 20 June 1995. UNHCR is also contributing to the Joint Evaluation of the Rwanda Emergency, which is an Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development/Development Assistance Committee (OECD/DAC) initiati UNHCR recently undertook a study of recurring lessons from emergencies; this involved a close examination of earlier studies of emergency situations such as Eastern Sudan (1985), the Persian Gulf (1990-1991) and the former Yugoslavia (1991-1993). These reviews are part of UNHCR's ongoing efforts to enhance furth its emergency response capacity.

2. Reintegration operations

20. By building mutually supportive linkages between humanitarian and developmental activities, dependency on relief can be reduced, solutions to refu problems facilitated, and an investment made towards the prevention of such problems. UNHCR is actively engaged in discussions with Governments, and intergovernmental and non-governmental agencies on assuring, particularly in cri and post-crisis situations, a better interface between humanitarian intervention and development. The mandate of the High Commissioner to promote durable soluti to refugee problems suggests that the humanitarian activities of UNHCR need to b linked to programmes aimed at long term development. This is particularly the c for the durable solution of voluntary repatriation.

21. In the experience of UNHCR, the realization of an effective transition from relief to recovery and development would, on one hand, enable humanitarian assistance to facilitate a viable reintegration of displaced people into a proce of social and economic recovery, and, on the other, bring development endeavours closer to people-centered concerns and aspirations. Without this reinforcing li

solutions to humanitarian crises may regress into new, divisive, communal problems. Operationally, UNHCR, strives to address humanitarian needs and concerns in a community context, rather than individually. This approach, primarily through sustainable area-based strategies and so-called quick impact projects (QIPs), aims at supporting a reconciliation and rehabilitation process in post-conflict societies by placing humanitarian concerns in a development perspective. A Policy and Methodological Framework to this effect has been developed, and programme management modalities are being refined to better meet new situations and needs. Their objective is to create closer linkages between UNHCR's operations and the activities of UNDP and other United Nations agencies, as well as bilateral actors.

22. A paper entitled "Assistance Policies and Strategies for the Promotion of Durable Solutions: Achieving Sustainable Reintegration" (EC/1995/SC.2/CRP.4) was presented to the SCAF meeting on 16 January 1995 (see also EC/SC.2/72, paras. 24-28). The High Commissioner strongly supports the concept of a "third window" of funding for emergency rehabilitation activities.

3. Refugee women and refugee children

23. In 1994, the Executive Committee, through an informal Working Group on Refugee Women and Children, looked into the diversity and persistent character of certain obstacles hampering the protection of refugee women and children (EC/SCP/85). The Executive Committee at its forty-fifth session (A/AC.96/839, para. 24 (g)) endorsed the initial identification of the special initiatives set out in the Report on the Situation of Refugee Women and Refugee Children and Financial Implications of the Working Group on Refugee Women and Refugee Children (EC/1994/SC.2/CRP.23/Rev.1). UNHCR continues to address the recommendations of the Working Group Report.

24. Among these recommendations, the Office, through the work of its Senior Coordinator for Refugee Women, continues to give particular attention to ongoing People-Oriented Planning (POP) training. POP is UNHCR's gender training programme; it seeks to enhance planning skills aimed at improving the targeting and delivery of UNHCR assistance and protection activities in the field.

25. In the lead up to the Global Conference on Women (Beijing, September 1995), UNHCR has been extensively involved in the preparatory process; such involvement is reflected in the attention given in the draft Plan of Action to the situation of refugee women.

26. On 8 March 1995, UNHCR issued a publication entitled "Sexual Violence against Refugees: Guidelines on Prevention and Response." More specifically, the SCAF reviewed at its 20 June 1995 meeting the evaluation of a project related to women victims of violence (EC/1995/SC.2/CRP.22), which had been initiated in Kenya in October 1993. This project was not only a focus for the field testing of UNHCR's Policy and Guidelines on [the Protection of] Refugee Women, but it also contributed to the Guidelines recently promulgated on the prevention of, and response to sexual violence.

27. On 23 June 1994, UNHCR promulgated revised guidelines on refugee children entitled "Refugee Children: Guidelines on Protection and Care". Over 14,000 copies of these guidelines have since been distributed to UNHCR staff and implementing partners working with refugee children.

28. As part of UNHCR's response to the Rwanda emergency, a Regional Support Unit for Refugee Children was established as a pilot project in Kigali, Rwanda, in January 1995. The Unit, staffed by a child welfare specialist and a protection officer for refugee children, provides technical assistance and programming support to UNHCR Field Offices and their operational partners in Rwanda, Burundi, Zaire and the United Republic of Tanzania; it also works to ensure regional coordination and inter-agency collaboration to promote family and community-based responses for children. The pilot is being reviewed to assess its applicability to other complex emergencies.

29. UNHCR has actively participated in and supported the Study on the Impact of Armed Conflict on Children, undertaken by the Expert appointed by the Secretary-General pursuant to General Assembly resolution 48/157 (1993). UNHCR also continues to support the Committee on the Rights of the Child and to explore collaborative ways to strengthen the implementation of recommendations of the Committee relevant to refugee children.

30. The 1995 Report of the High Commissioner to ECOSOC (E/1995/52) has further information on UNHCR's initiatives in regard to refugee women (paras. 64-67) and refugee children (paras. 68-70).

4. Environment

31. UNHCR issued "Interim Guidelines for Environment-Sensitive Management of Refugee Programmes" in July 1994; these focus on preventive and pro-active approaches to alleviate environmental problems, such as deforestation, associated with refugee camps. These first environmental guidelines of UNHCR aim to respond to General Assembly resolution 47/191 on the follow up of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (Brazil, 1992).

32. A report (EC/1994/SC.2/CRP.24) on UNHCR's activities in the area of the environment was presented to the SCAF meeting on 29 September 1994. Following discussion of a range of environmental issues, the Executive Committee adopted a conclusion on refugees and the environment, wherein the Committee requested "the High Commissioner to formulate and promote refugee-related environment projects in collaboration with host Governments, donors, international and national non-governmental organizations, other organizations, and with the refugees themselves, so as to mitigate the adverse impact on the environment of host countries" (A/AC.96/839, para. 25 (a)). This conclusion reflected interventions made during the session urging the Office to strengthen its activities in mitigating the environmental impact of refugees in asylum countries; it also reflected the concern about the financial implications of such actions. The strategy of the Office in addressing environmental concerns, including ways of mobilizing external resources, thus became a focal issue.

33. In December 1994, UNHCR decided to establish a short-term working group to address the issues raised in the above-mentioned conclusion, including the related socio-economic impact of hosting refugees. A Working Group on Environment and Refugee-Affected Area Concerns was formed. Its report was finalized on 7 July 1995. The Executive Committee will have before it, at its forty-sixth session, a position paper based on the findings of the report of the Working Group.

IV. PROGRAMMES AND FUNDING

A. Informal consultations

34. Since the last Executive Committee, and as mentioned above, the SCAF has undertaken a major review of UNHCR's programmes and funding. At the forty-fifth session of the Executive Committee, it was decided to review a range of issues related to budgets, fund raising, transparency and governance (see A/AC.96/839, para. 24). More particularly, and as the report (A/AC.96/838) of the SCAF meeting of 29 September 1994 indicates, there has been a continuing concern on the part of some delegations as to the validity of the distinction between General and Special Programmes and the governance of the Executive Committee, particularly over the latter.

35. Underpinning the consultations was a consensus that UNHCR's budget structure should allow priority to be given to the statutory activities of UNHCR; moreover, it was recognized that the budget structure should provide the High Commissioner with the flexibility necessary to respond effectively to needs. It was also agreed that the budget structure should be transparent, thus allowing the Executive Committee to exercise governance and oversight.

36. While it was recognized that, in theory, a single integrated budget and a resource base that provided assured funding for the statutory, and therefore priority, activities of UNHCR should meet these objectives, in practice, several key factors have made this unattainable. These related to the nature of UNHCR's programmes and of its resource base. Thus, two types of programming and budgeting have evolved: General and Special Programmes. There was the recognition that the present structure had developed, under the guidance of the Executive Committee, to address the above-mentioned budgetary objectives within a changing context. Allowing for the enhancements proposed see Informal Consultations on Budgetary Questions: Draft Conclusions on Budgetary Structure, Presentation, Governance and Other Matters (EC/1995/SC.2/CRP.24/Corr.1/Add.1)) and other envisaged changes, it was agreed that the present budget structure built around General and Special Programmes should be maintained. In joining in this consensus, several delegations were reassured by the related proposals in regard to greater transparency in budgetary presentations and the mechanisms to assure greater governance.

37. The conclusions emanating from the Informal Consultations relating to programmes and funding, and adopted at the SCAF meeting on 20 June 1995, to be endorsed by the Executive Committee at its forty-sixth session, provide for the following:

(i) that priority be given to statutory activities by moving these into General Programmes to the fullest extent possible, in accordance with criteria that have been clarified and on whose application the Executive Committee would be regularly informed;

(ii) that where such transfers are not possible, at least some of the benefits of the allocations and reserves established within General Programmes would be available for statutory activities otherwise funded under Special Programmes, in accordance with revised criteria;

(iii) the regular review by the Executive Committee of the criteria governing and the levels of the Programme Reserve and Voluntary Repatriation Reserve; a flexible range for setting the levels of these two Reserves has been agreed to, with the actual level for a given year to be decided in consultation with the Executive Committee.

38. It was recognized that the review of UNHCR's budget structure must necessarily be an ongoing process. The SCAF has agreed on a number of areas for further study.

B. Updates on programmes and funding

39. A regular feature of SCAF meetings is the review of UNHCR's programmes and funding; this review is facilitated by documentation prepared by the Secretariat. In the last twelve months, such reviews were undertaken at SCAF meetings on 29 September 1994; 16 January 1995; 4 April 1995; 20 June 1995. The following documents were presented:

- Update of UNHCR Programme and Funding: Projections for 1994 and 1995 (EC/1994/SC.2/CRP.25);

- Overall Programme and Funding Projections for 1994 and 1995 and Revised 1995 General Programmes Target (EC/1995/SC.2/CRP.6), and EC/1995/SC.2/CRP.6/Corr.1;

- Update on 1994 Programme Expenditure and on Programme and Funding Projections for 1995 (EC/1995/SC.2/CRP.14);

- Update on Programme and Funding Projections for 1995 and Tentative Estimates for the 1996 General Programmes Target (EC/1995/SC.2/CRP.19).

40. Among the conclusions of the Informal Consultations on UNHCR's Budget Structure adopted at the 20 June SCAF meeting were the following:

In addition to the broad review of General and Special Programmes at the time of the Executive Committee, inter-sessional meetings shall consider updates on programme needs and funding; at

inter-sessional meetings, there shall also be a review of all country programmes (General and Special) in a particular region or regions (e.g. Asia/SWANAME; Europe/Americas; Africa), and of any Special Programmes covering a number of countries in the region(s).

The uses made of the Emergency Fund, the Programme Reserve and the Voluntary Repatriation Fund shall be reviewed by the Executive Committee at its annual and inter-sessional meetings at the time of each of the programme reviews [ ], to ensure that their use is in accord with the governing criteria.

These conclusions, aimed at assuring the necessary governance of the Executive Committee over UNHCR's programmes, will also provide a framework for the inter-sessional considerations of UNHCR's programmes and funding.

C. Voluntary repatriation programmes

41. A regular feature of the work of SCAF is the review of UNHCR's voluntary repatriation programmes. To facilitate this review a comprehensive document is prepared. At the 4 April 1995 meeting of SCAF, the Sub-Committee had before it a document entitle Update on Voluntary Repatriation Movements (EC/1995/SC.2/CRP.12). This document set out the progress achieved in the previous year, and the planning assumptions and constraints for the current year. It also contained statistical information for the previous year and projections for the current year. The tentative budgetary estimates for voluntary repatriation in 1995 were some $ 250 million.

D. Refugee education

42. The Executive Committee at its forty-fifth session considered a paper on UNHCR's Education Account (EC/SC.2/69). The paper made reference to the revision of UNHCR's Guidelines for Educational Assistance to Refugees. These revised Guidelines were issued on 27 June 1995. The revised Guidelines incorporate policies developed in response to the Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989), UNHCR's Policy on Refugee Children (1993) and UNHCR's "Refugee Children: Guidelines on Protection and Care" (1994). The Guidelines also give information on the German Albert Einstein Academic Refugee Initiative (DAFI), funded by Germany to assist refugee students attending university-level courses in their countries of asylum. The Guidelines provide information on the proposed introduction under the Annual Programme from 1996 of provisions to extend assistance for vocational training to cover short-term technical and other courses directly fitting refugees for employment, particularly after repatriation, and thus promoting durable solutions. New university scholarships would be covered by DAFI and continue to be focused on courses providing direct job-opportunities.

E. Refugee health

43. Among the issues relating to the health of refugees, that of the reproductive health of refugees has received increasing attention from the Executive Committee. An inter-agency symposium on "Reproductive Health in Refugee Situations" was organized by UNHCR and UNFPA, in collaboration with UNICEF and WHO, from 28 to 30 June 1995. Some 50 governmental, intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations participated in the symposium, for which two preparatory meetings were held in Geneva and Nairobi. At the symposium, participants stressed the importance of providing reproductive health services to refugees from the earliest possible stage and agreed on the essential elements of these services. One means to this end is the preparation of a field manual. A draft was reviewed at the symposium and is being revised in light of the recommendations of participants for distribution to the field by the end of 1995.

V. RELATED PROGRAMME MATTERS

A. Refugee statistics

44. UNHCR has recently issued the 1994 edition of "Populations of Concern to UNHCR: A Statistical Overview". The report provides statistics on refugees and other persons of concern to UNHCR. The statistical information presented was provided, in the main, by Governments, and is thus mostly based on their own records and methods of estimation. The data were collected through UNHCR's annual statistical survey and present the situation at the end of 1994. The statistics do not include Palestinian refugees who come under the mandate of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA).

45. During 1994 and 1995, a number of UNHCR operations were supported in their registration activities through the provision of standard materials, training and targeted missions, including those in Burkina Faso, Burundi, Ethiopia, Ghana, Kenya, Mauritania, Sudan, the United Republic of Tanzania, Togo, Uganda, and Zaire. In February 1995, a first Registration Workshop was held in Nairobi, Kenya, which was attended by some 20 UNHCR staff members from many of the above countries, as well as by WFP.

46. During 1994-1995, UNHCR has been actively involved in the preparatory process to revise the 1980 United Nations Recommendations on International Migration Statistics, a process coordinated by the United Nations Statistical Division in New York. One of the major shortcomings of the current Recommendations is, according to Member States of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe, that they exclude refugees, persons in refugee-like situations and asylum-seekers. In addition, the possibility of developing international guidelines on refugee and asylum statistics is being examined. In this context, an informal meeting was organized by UNHCR and the Statistical Office of the European Communities (Eurostat) on refugee and asylum statistics from 15 to 17 May 1995 in Geneva. Participants in the meeting, including government experts from Canada, France, Germany, Sweden, Switzerland and the United Kingdom, as well as representatives from various international organizations, agreed on the importance of international standards for refugee and asylum statistics.

B. Food

47. A revised Memorandum of Understanding between UNHCR and WFP on the Joint Working Arrangements for Refugee, Returnee and Internally Displaced Persons Feeding Operations came into effect on 1 January 1994. According to the Memorandum, WFP is responsible for both procuring and delivering basic food commodities (cereals, edible oil/fats, pulses/sources of protein, salt, sugar and blended food), for all recent as well as ongoing operations relating to internally displaced persons and for all refugee and returnee operations in developing countries with beneficiary populations of over 5,000 persons. UNHCR has assumed the responsibility of supplying all food commodities to new refugee/returnee caseloads of up to 5,000 persons as of 1 January 1994. From 1 January 1995, UNHCR has also taken responsibility for all existing feeding operations for caseloads under 5,000.

48. The above arrangements cover basic food commodities. UNHCR remains responsible for providing complementary food commodities (dried skim milk/dried whole milk, high energy biscuits, local fresh foods, condiments) whenever these are required in a food basket, as agreed with WFP.

49. UNHCR and WFP continue to review their working arrangements through biannual UNHCR/WFP Task Force Meetings. These meetings evaluate the general status of implementation of the Memorandum of Understanding and certain generic issues related to food assistance, such as planning of assessments, nutrition, household surveys and registration. For major operations, as in the case of the Great Lakes Operation, which covers five countries, UNHCR and WFP also coordinate food assistance and planning through regional meetings.

50. Joint UNHCR/WFP Food Assessment Missions determine food basket composition, ration levels and the duration of the feeding operation for large caseloads. These missions, whenever appropriate, include participation by donors and NGOs responsible for the implementation of refugee feeding programmes in a given region. UNHCR is strengthening the technical preparation for food needs assessments. Therefore, several registration exercises, nutritional surveys, household surveys and self-sufficiency evaluations (agriculture and other income-generating projects) have been carried out prior to food assessment missions. Since June 1994, the following food assessment missions were undertaken by the Headquarters staff of both organizations: Djibouti (February 1995); Ethiopia (February 1995); Guinea and Côte d'Ivoire (July 1995); the Islamic Republic of Iran (July 1995); Liberia/Sierra Leone (October 1994); Mozambique (February 1995); Myanmar (September 1994); Pakistan (April 1995). Locally organized food assessment missions were also undertaken in Kenya (November 1994) and Mauritania (November 1994).

51. At the field level, UNHCR's responsibilities include the ongoing monitoring of the nutritional well-being of the refugees, the timely and targeted distribution to those in need of food assistance, and the related reporting. In order to ensure that these responsibilities are addressed within UNHCR's overall

refugee coordination function, the Office has created the posts of Regional Food Aid Coordinators in Bangladesh and Kenya; for the Great Lakes Operation, UNHCR now has two Food Aid Coordinators (Zaire and the United Republic of Tanzania), and is establishing a regional coordination unit.

52. The UNHCR training programme, "Management of Food Aid and Nutrition", is ongoing and, to date, some 50 UNHCR staff at field level have participated in this training. WFP also participates in these training programmes and, recently, two NGOs have taken part in the training in Asia. This training programme will be extended to Headquarters staff in the near future. The present training programme follows the main clauses of the MOU. In order to enhance awareness of all food related issues (with particular attention to nutrition), the following topics which are particularly related to the UNHCR responsibilities are covered: UNHCR's food aid policy; assessing the nutritional status and food needs; distribution and commodity management; monitoring and reporting; coordination mechanisms. A joint UNHCR/WFP training programme is being developed from the currently independent training programmes of both agencies.

53. In 1994, UNHCR provided, through donor contributions in both cash and kind, food valued at some $ 23 million. Of this, 63 per cent was for countries in Africa, mainly Algeria, Mauritania, Uganda and Zaire. A further 13 per cent was for Asia and 18 per cent for former Yugoslavia. The remainder was for countries in South America and the Middle East, and the Commonwealth of Independent States. With the exception of corn soya blend, which UNHCR purchased for the Rwanda Emergency programme, the bulk of this food was complementary commodities. In tonnage, UNHCR supplied some 31,000 metric tons of food aid in 1994.

54. In 1994, WFP delivered 1,735,085 metric tons of food aid, valued (including shipping and local purchase) at $ 633,282,573. Of this, 988,998 metric tons of food aid valued at $ 415,018,918 was for Emergency Operations and the remainder for Protracted (or ongoing) Operations. These figures represent the WFP assistance to both refugee/returnee and displaced persons operations.

C. Military support to UNHCR activities

55. Military support for UNHCR operations has taken two forms. The first derives from the security coverage provided by the military to humanitarian operations; the second arises when the unique skills and timely intervention of the military are required and appropriate to UNHCR's emergency operations.

56. The first type of support is normally provided in the context of a United Nations peace-keeping operation. A unique case is that in eastern Zaire, where the High Commissioner had no option but to negotiate directly with the Zairian Government regarding their army assuring security in the province of Kivu. Given the increased number of peace-keeping operations in support of humanitarian operations, UNHCR has recognized the need for better understanding between UNHCR and the military. Drawing on its experience in the former Yugoslavia, UNHCR published in January 1995 a first edition of the "UNHCR Handbook for the Military

in Humanitarian Operations" and a complementary internal staff training module entitled "Working with the Military". UNHCR has also extended support to DPKO in developing relevant sections of a common curriculum for national military Staff Colleges.

57. The second type of relationship of UNHCR to the military is reflected in arrangements described above under "service packages". In addition, it sometimes involves the secondment of skilled military personnel to support emergency or ongoing humanitarian operations, such as the Sarajevo airlift, for which, inter alia, military personnel have been seconded to an Air Operations Cell at UNHCR Headquarters.

D. Telecommunications

58. UNHCR is a major user of telecommunication services. With over 200 office locations, many of them isolated, good communications are vital for efficient programme delivery and staff security. UNHCR has taken a number of initiatives to improve service levels and reduce unit costs, notably in the areas of satellite communications, data networks and "least cost" routing of calls. At the same time, UNHCR has been advocating the promotion of common standards and encouraging the use of shared facilities in United Nations field telecommunications.

59. At the forty-fifth session of the Executive Committee, the subject of UNHCR telecommunications arose in the context of SCAF's consideration of budgetary proposals for the upgrading and overhaul of the UNHCR communications network. Among the proposals was one for the purchase of Very Small Aperture Terminals (VSAT) and satellite antennae; these were to be the basis of a proposed fixed cost satellite network for voice and data communications initially between UNHCR Headquarters and Field Offices.

60. The SCAF had before it the opinion of the ACABQ which recommended that:

> UNHCR continue its efforts to develop telecommunications capability in cooperation with the United Nations and its programmes and operations, and report further in the context of budget proposals for 1996, to be considered in the second half of 1995. In the meantime, the Advisory Committee recommend[ed] that no further purchase of VSATs and satellite antennae and leasing of satellite capacity take place prior to the consideration and approval of a comprehensive proposal (A/AC.96/834).

61. The reservations of the ACABQ were noted by SCAF. The Sub-Committee felt that rather than being a new activity, the VSAT proposal was an elaboration of ongoing activities. SCAF interpreted the ACABQ reservations as relating to further new proposals rather than those already submitted (see "Report of the Sub-Committee on Administrative and Financial Matters", A/AC.96/838, para. 44).

62. The SCAF returned to the important issue of telecommunications at its meeting on 4 April 1995. The Sub-Committee had before it an Information Note on Telecommunications in UNHCR (EC/1995/SC.2/CRP.16). The paper recalled that in

January 1993 UNHCR decided to pursue the creation of a VSAT network in cooperation with other United Nations organizations, not only for obvious reasons of economies of scale, but also taking account of the International Telecommunications Union (ITU) resolutions which allow the United Nations to obtain resources and operate a telecommunication network for its exclusive use on advantageous terms. In May 1993, UNHCR and the United Nations Secretariat initiated an Inter-Agency Working Group, under the chairmanship of UNHCR, with participation from UNICEF, UNDP, DPKO, WFP and others. The proposed technical specification was finalized by these parties, coordinated by UNHCR. The United Nations Secretariat has for some time been developing plans for a "backbone" satellite network which provides high-density traffic paths between a smaller number of big offices. It also requires a hub antenna which the backbone and VSAT networks can share. The European hub station was approved for construction by the General Assembly (General Assembly resolution 48/262). A competitive procurement on behalf of all agencies for a commonly specified VSAT is underway. UNHCR has played the lead role in its technical specification. This new network is an extremely important activity for UNHCR and other United Nations agencies. It is expected that overall costs will be charged on an equitable cost-recovery basis to all participants. UNHCR proposes to acquire a sufficient number of VSAT terminals to improve its communications whilst reducing total costs.

63. In summing up this agenda item, the Chairman noted that there was broad support for the approach being taken by UNHCR to the development of its telecommunications systems and ensuring their compatibility with longer-term initiatives of the rest of the United Nations system.

VI. HUMAN RESOURCE ISSUES

64. Aspects of UNHCR's human resource policy were considered by SCAF at its 4 April 1995 meeting. In addition to the question of the deployment of female protection and field staff (EC/1995/SC.2/CRP.11), the Sub-Committee focused on progress in the implementation of the Career Management System (CMS) which was launched in October 1994. The Sub-Committee had before it a progress report on the project (EC/1995/SC.2/CRP.8).

65. The CMS has four inter-related components:

- a component that defines the skills required to do a job (competencies), and identifies the skills of individual staff members (skills profiles);
- a system of performance evaluation;
- a component that identifies typical career paths open to staff, together with the type of training and acquired experience required; and
- a staff development programme oriented to providing both relevant managerial training and more focused training to acquire specialized UNHCR competencies.

66. On 19 January 1995, UNHCR's Senior Management Committee (SMC) approved the overall vision of a CMS most likely to be suitable for UNHCR and supportive of UNHCR's human resources strategy; this initial vision of the CMS had been drawn up by the project team after preliminary staff consultation. More particularly, the SMC approved a tentative set of design principles and characteristics applicable to each CMS component. The approval of these design principles and system characteristics provided the framework for the next stage of the project, namely more extensive consultation with field staff. Consultations with field staff were held from January through March 1995, involving some 1,500 UNHCR staff in some 30 countries representative of UNHCR's field operations in all regions. The views of staff, when analysed, were reflected in detailed proposals for each CMS component. These proposals were presented for SMC review in late April. The CMS is to undergo a pilot test in UNHCR's Regional Bureau for Asia and Oceania branch offices in Asia, as well as within the Division of Human Resources Management started in July 1995. This pilot project will test each of the CMS components to the fullest extent possible over a seven-month period. During the late spring and summer of 1996 the pilot project will be evaluated and revisions will be made. During the last half of 1996 the organization as a whole will begin to undertake the training necessary for CMS activities and the CMS will be applied to the entire organization from January 1997.

VII. GOVERNANCE AND OVERSIGHT

67. The governance by the Executive Committee over the Programme of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees derives from General Assembly resolution 1166 (XII) of 26 November 1957 and ECOSOC resolution 672 (XXV) of 30 April 1958. The former called on ECOSOC to establish the Executive Committee and proposed its terms of reference; the latter established the Executive Committee with functions reflecting the terms of reference set out in the former. The issue of governance was one of the major issues dealt with in the Informal Consultations on UNHCR's budget structure. As part of the Informal Consultations, UNHCR presented a Note (dated 20 April 1995) on "Governance". In launching the Informal Consultations, one of the concerns of the Executive Committee was the level of governance over Special Programmes. The recommendations adopted at the SCAF meeting on 20 June 1995, and which will be presented at the forty-sixth session of the Executive Committee for endorsement, approached the issue more broadly by addressing, inter alia, the review of various oversight reports.

68. As regards oversight, it will be recalled that within the broad objective of strengthening UNHCR's management capacity, the Executive Committee, at its forty-fifth session, approved the creation of the post of Director of an Inspection and Evaluation Service for UNHCR. This Service, which incorporated an already existing Central Evaluation Section, became operational in March 1995. The Service is staffed by a Director (D-2), a principal officer (P-5), three senior officers (P-4) and three General Service staff. The High Commissioner will present to the Executive Committee at its annual session a report on the work of UNHCR's Inspection and Evaluation Service.

VIII. CONCLUSION

69. The preceding paragraphs provide background information which is relevant to the range of budgetary and financial matters treated in Parts I and II of this document. Part III highlights, in particular, the way in which the broader humanitarian assistance issues that occupy the attention of the General Assembly and ECOSOC have been reflected in the deliberations of SCAF and the activities of UNHCR, and the breadth and depth of governance exercised by the Executive Committee over UNHCR's assistance activities.